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MONTANA Conservation

A Newsletter of the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation • Director Bud Clinch

Volume 3 • Number 2 • April 1997

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Director Bud Clinch

One question that has frequently been asked over the past month is "What is happening with the department's budget?" While it is too early to predict any final numbers, I can show how it stands at this time.

Our budget is part of House Bill 2, the General Appropriations Act of 1997. As I write this column, HB2 has been transferred from the House of Representatives to the Senate. On March 25, it was heard by the Senate Finance and Claims Committee and is now going before the full Senate for second and third readings. Virtually all that we had originally requested is still in the bill. The department was successful in the Senate Finance and Claims Committee in restoring the department's personnel officer position, which had been mistakenly identified as an additional, unfilled position that could be easily removed. We still hope to correct a funding error affecting the Trust Land Management Division that developed through an amendment to increase funding for the school equalization program.

Director Bud Clinch

The table below shows the Fiscal Year (FY) 1998 budget as it now stands.

A little explanation of the table might be in order. The FY 98 budget is built on a base of expenditures made in FY 96. To the base budget of $24,055,190 are added "Present Law Adjustments." These adjustments include additional funding needed by the department to maintain ongoing operations and services, due to changes in workload, funding, or inflation. This biennium these included changes in equipment purchases, authority to spend private funds for preparation of environmental impact statements, grants and local assistance, weed control and damage compensation, workload increases,

Message from the Director. . . *continued on page 2*

Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Budget for FY 98

Division	FY 96 Base Budget	Present Law Adjustments	New Proposals	Total FY 98 Budget	Total FY 98 FTEs
CARDD	$ 1,468,011	$ 455,566	$ 33,646	$ 1,957,223	19.5
CSD	$ 2,906,066	$ (470,962)	$ 45,687	$ 2,480,791	40
Forestry	$ 7,688,659	$ 708,817	$ 142,912	$ 8,540,388	167.91
Oil & Gas	$ 795,768	$ 236,706	$ 92,140	$ 1,124,614	20.5
RWRCC	$ 507,048	$ 59,461		$ 566,509	11
TLMD	$ 5,453,825	$ 1,370,388		$ 6,824,213	121.71
Water	$ 5,235,813	$ 1,194,644	$ 310,000	$ 6,740,457	112.5
TOTAL	$ 24,055,190	$ 3,554,620	$ 624,385	$ 28,234,195	493.12

"To help ensure Montana's land and water resources provide benefits for present and future generations."

Message from the Director. . . *continued from page 1*

increased operating expenses, leased vehicles, Broadwater Dam projects, fire management analysis, land rental, and aircraft hangar rent. The decrease shown for Centralized Services Division is attributable to a re-allocation of building rent to other divisions and a reduction in FTEs due to reorganization.

On top of these Present Law Adjustments are several "New Proposals" by the department. These provide new non-mandated services, changed program services, or different sources of funding. New Proposals for this biennium include additional funding for three employees to implement the Underground Injection Control Program, one new FTE for the Community Forestry Program, adding Granite and Mineral Counties to the State/County Cooperative Fire Program, an employee to process loans under the Public Drinking Water Program, and $310,000 for the Rocky Boys/North Central Montana Regional Water Supply System feasibility study.

The legislature is also considering major shifts in how the department funds some of its programs. One proposal would shift funding of several DNRC divisions out of Resource Indemnity Trust funds and into the general fund. Another would fund the operations of the Trust Land Management Division using trust revenues instead of the general fund. The jury is still out on whether these proposals will be successful.

In addition to HB2, several other bills in various stages of completion affect the budget. House Bill 3, the Supplemental Appropriation Bill for Fiscal Year 1997, contains our $4.5 million fire supplemental request; it has just recently been returned from the Senate to the House with amendments. House Bill 5, Capital Projects Appropriations, has just passed second reading in the House; this bill contains appropriations of $200,000 for state building maintenance and $175,000 for the Plains Unit fire cache. House Bill 6, Renewable Resource Grants, has been returned from the Senate to the House with amendments. House Bills 7 and 8, Reclamation and Development Grants and Renewable Resource Loans and Bonds, have both been signed by the governor. And, finally, House Bill 13, the Pay Plan Bill, has been transmitted from the House to the Senate.

In addition to these bills are various "cat and dog bills" that would impact the services the department presently provides. Fiscal notes are attached to these bills to provide the necessary funding. If the bills pass, then the funding would become part of the department budget.

At the conclusion of the legislative session, I'll update you regarding department funding. That time will also be appropriate for a report concerning any bills enacted that affect state employees.

PROGRAM FOCUS

WATER RESOURCES DIVISION

The Water Resources Division (WRD), which is comprised of four bureaus and employs approximately 114 persons, is responsible for the following programs.

- ★ Dam Safety
- ★ Water Measurement
- ★ Floodplain Management
- ★ Water Rights
- ★ State-Owned Water Projects
- ★ Assistance to Local Planning Entities
- ★ Technical Assistance
- ★ Board of Water Well Contractors

Because of the variety of WRD's programs and newsletter space considerations, only two of the bureaus—Water Operations and Water Rights—are described in this issue of *DNRConversation*. The other two bureaus—Water Management and State Water Projects—will be covered in the next issue.

In addition to the central office located in downtown Helena, eight regional offices implement WRD's programs at the local level.

Administration Unit

Gary Fritz

The Administration Unit provides oversight responsibilities for the division. Robin Harper oversees the division's budget and coordinates all personnel action. Cindy Forgey supervises the division's secretarial staff and is assisted with clerical duties by Shannon Beaupre. The regional offices are directed by Jack Stults. Rick Bondy, senior engi-

neer, provides engineering oversight and technical assistance to all engineering programs in the division. Gary Fritz adjusts division resources to ensure the success of programs and projects, and he provides direction to the division's highest priority programs. Gary feels that "The test of whether a government agency is successful is whether it is helping to make positive changes in Montanans' lives. The Water Resources Division passes that test, not because of management direction, but because of the competency and dedication of the people carrying out its programs."

Water Operations Bureau

Of more than 3,500 dams in Montana, about 84 are considered to be high hazard—that is, dams impounding 50 acre-feet or more that would likely cause a loss of life if failure occurs. The owner of each high hazard dam must apply for and receive an operation permit from the Dam Safety Program. This permit ensures that the dam is being properly operated, maintained, and inspected. Gary Fischer, the dam safety program manager, has been busy making sure dam owners are prepared for the higher than usual spring runoff. Michele Lemieux has been helping several dam owners prepare seepage monitoring plans.

Laurence Siroky, Gary Fischer, and Michelle Lemieux work cooperatively with owners to bring high hazard dams into compliance with dam safety regulations. A significant part of the program's effort includes dam owner awareness and education.

The Board of Water Well Contractors is responsible for licensing water well drillers, water well contractors, and monitoring well contractors. This six-member board establishes water well construction standards and enforcement and training procedures. Bob Rudio, who serves as staff to the board, licenses water well drillers and investigates complaints against drillers. Bob's extensive experience in well drilling helps him determine whether water well construction standards are being followed.

Michele Lemieux

In 1991 the legislature determined that it was important to measure the use of water on streams where chronic dewatering significantly impairs beneficial uses. When the department designates streams as chronically dewatered, water users must not only measure how much water they use, but also have to install diversion structures that can regulate how much water is diverted. Laurence Siroky and Dave Amman are currently working with major canal owners in the Jefferson River basin to help them install measuring devices. They also ensure that water users are installing measuring devices and reporting the water use data on streams already designated as chronically dewatered, such as the Musselshell River and Mill Creek near Livingston.

Dave Amman

With record amounts of snowfall on the ground, flooding is a significant concern this spring. A proactive approach to flooding problems, the Floodplain Management Program is intended to reduce the loss of life and property by designating floodplains and then restricting the kinds of development that can occur.

Water Resources Division . . . *continued on page 4*

PROGRAM FOCUS

Water Resources Division. . . *continued from page 3*

Karl Christians

Karl Christians oversees and coordinates the program, which includes designating and amending floodplains, ensuring the adoption of local floodplain ordinances, ensuring that federal floodplain and flood insurance programs are satisfied, and helping local floodplain administrators interpret and enforce floodplain regulations.

Pat Boggess provides administrative and secretarial support to the bureau. With her knowledge of the programs and friendly demeanor, Pat demonstrates competence and gets the bureau staff off to a great start in their dealings with the public.

Water Rights Bureau

The Water Rights Bureau is responsible for ensuring the orderly appropriation and beneficial use of Montana's waters. Montana, like most other western states, operates on the prior appropriation doctrine, which stipulates "first in time is first in right." This principle is the common thread found in all our water right programs.

The structure of the Water Rights Bureau has been the same for 20 years. The challenges facing Montana's water users have changed, however, and the bureau is now being restructured to face those challenges. Bureau Chief Nancy Andersen is handling the reorganization, which includes studying all duties performed by each staff member as well as analyzing which duties are best performed in the regional offices and which should be handled in the central office. Nancy Hughes and Kim Overcast are spearheading implementation efforts.

Water Rights Bureau staff: (seated, from left) Rita Nason, Bob Arrington, Nancy Andersen, Nancy Hughes, Dorothy Padron, and Regina Fullerton; (middle row, from left) Jim Edgar, Terri McLaughlin, Jim Kindle, Vivian Lighthizer, Illa Phillips, Becky Ketchum, and Kim Overcast; (back row, from left) Terry Scow, Hal Peck, Cindy Campbell, and Ann Goetze

PROGRAM FOCUS

Adjudication Program

Bob Arrington and Rita Nason work to direct the bureau's Adjudication Program, which deals with historical (pre-1973) water uses. Claims describing these historical water uses are filed with the department. When water right specialists in the division's regional offices complete their analysis of all claims in a basin, a comprehensive report detailing the findings is submitted to the Water Court. Individuals who disagree with the claims or the department's analysis may object. After considering all the facts, the Water Court issues a decree that actually delineates or "adjudicates" these historical water uses. Once a decree is in place, it becomes a useful tool in settling water use disputes. Ann Goetze captures these important documents on microfilm that is used by staff around the state and by members of the public. Regina Fullerton assists the Water Court by updating the computer database.

New Appropriations

While the actual use of water created a water right before 1973, the Montana Water Use Act established a water permitting system for post-1973 water rights. Terri McLaughlin and Kim Overcast steer the New Appropriations Program, which is responsible for issuing permits for new water uses and authorizations to change existing water uses. Dorothy Padron records these activities on microfilm for use by members of the public and by regional office staff. Applicants for new water uses must meet the criteria outlined in statute, which helps ensure that those holding older, "senior" water rights will be able to use their water and not be adversely affected by new, "junior" uses. Water right specialists in the regional offices carefully analyze these water use applications to determine whether the statutory criteria have been met, and the regional managers approve new water use permits and changes in their respective regions.

Additionally, the department issues certificates for uses of groundwater less than 35 gallons per minute and 10 acre-feet per year. While the majority of these certificates are issued from the regional offices, Illa Phillips and Terry Scow participate in processing the applications. Terry also handles a variety of other new appropriations functions and is solely responsible for the public notice process on all the permits, changes, and extensions.

Hearings Unit

When objections to proposed water uses and changes cannot be settled by the parties involved, they may request a hearing. Hearings Examiner Vivian Lighthizer and Hearings Assistant Cindy Campbell schedule and conduct administrative hearings around the state.

Administrative Services Team

The Administrative Services Team assists and supports these technical programs in a variety of ways.

Jim Kindle initially developed the water right database, which is the "holding tank" for the state's vital water right data and one of the largest databases in state government. Most requests for computer reports and assistance are handled by Jim.

When property changes ownership, typically the water rights associated with the property change ownership, too. Regina Fullerton, Illa Phillips, and Nancy Hughes are largely responsible for updating the water right database to reflect the new water right owners.

Statistics and research are the cornerstones of any successful organization, and Jim Edgar can always be counted on to provide those important analytical management tools. Jim also troubleshoots the bureau's computer hardware and keeps all the staff's equipment running smoothly.

A critical member of the Administrative Services Team, Hal Peck documents the bureau's water right policies so staff in the regional offices have comprehensive guidelines. Nancy Hughes assists with adjudication matters, computer entry training, public meet-

Water Resources Division. . . *continued on page 6*

Water Resources Division. . . *continued from page 5*

ing preparation, various operational problems, and special projects throughout the bureau.

The entire bureau depends on Becky Ketchum, who not only directs phone calls, but helps every staff member in any way she can.

Regional Offices

It has long been the philosophy of the division to decentralize its programs to its eight regional offices in Billings, Bozeman, Glasgow, Havre, Helena, Kalispell, Lewistown, and Missoula. Over the last several years a number of Helena-based FTEs have been transferred to the regional offices. Jack Stults, regional offices supervisor, has been instrumental in ensuring that the division's programs are implemented at the local level.

The regional offices handle water right applications and disputes, help repair state-owned dams and canals, survey floodplain cross-sections, work with local people on watershed planning, and so on. Regional office staff are working cooperatively with other division and department units to develop a geographic information system (GIS) for water resources and water rights data. They also coordinate with other local, federal, and state agencies to reduce duplication and maximize problem-solving capabilities. For example, Ron Miller, water resources specialist in Glasgow, took a central role in successful efforts to secure $5.8 million in federal and $500,000 in state funding for the Fort Peck rural water system.

Being close to the land and the people in their areas enables regional staff to craft localized solutions to problems and thereby avoid additional conflicts. A great example is John Hunter, hydrologist/planner in the Lewistown office, and his work on a management plan for the Musselshell River basin. Brent Esplin, hydrologist/planner in Glasgow, is working toward what we hope will be a similar success in the lower Milk River basin.

Further, an on-site presence can result in substantial savings of time and money on projects. One example is the role of Sterling Sundheim, engineering specialist in the Lewistown office, in the repair of Petrolia Dam; another is the Bozeman staff's monitoring of the refilling of Middle Fork Reservoir on Hyalite Creek.

One of the routine but essential services the regional staff provide is day-to-day assistance to the public on water rights and other water resources data and management. Last year staff at the Missoula Regional Office responded to approximately 11,000 public contacts. This intense amount of interaction with area residents keeps us aware of activities in our regions, thereby improving the division's overall ability to fulfill our responsibilities.

Helena Regional Office staff (from left): Greg Van Voast, Sonja Hoeglund, Patti Miller, Jim Beck, Marshall Sewell, T. J. Reynolds, Kathy Arndt, and Jim Gilman

DEPARTMENT NEWS

PREPARING FOR SPRING RUNOFF

The water content of the snow is about 60 percent above normal in the mountains above the Missouri and the Yellowstone rivers, and new records have been set in some locations. Snowpack in the Clark Fork, Bitterroot, and Flathead basins is 50 percent more than usual, and it is at least 30 percent above normal in Montana's other major river basins. Consequently, rivers and streams are likely to run very high this spring. Peak flows in some places could exceed previous all-time maximums, and flooding is likely. High flows impact reservoirs and dams, as well, and can pose the threat of overtopping and washing out a dam.

DNRC is taking a number of steps to deal with this situation.

WRD's Dam Safety Program is providing data about snowpack, streamflow, and sources of weather and emergency response information. Major dam operators in Montana, such as the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, are already dropping reservoirs to springtime levels well below normal, and owners of private dams are being reminded that reducing storage now will provide room to store flood flows later. The program has also prepared a checklist, covering such items as keeping spillways clear of debris and ice, that will help dam owners anticipate and prevent problems. Through newsletters and news releases, program staff have offered to consult with dam owners or visit individual dam sites to offer suggestions on ways to prevent dam failures.

The Floodplain Program has been assisting local county and city officials and answering questions about floodplain insurance and other technical matters involving floodplain regulations. DNRC has a standing agreement with the Department of Transportation to have aerial photos taken in floodplain areas to assist in floodplain delineations and damage estimates.

DNRC also provides information to the Drought Advisory Committee. This year, however, the committee has been alerted to help prepare for the deep water that almost certainly is coming, rather than for dry conditions.

Our Forestry Division, too, has been meeting with Disaster and Emergency Services (DES), because DES may need aircraft or other equipment from DNRC. Forestry Division may also provide some personnel to respond to emergency situations. If so, the priority will be on bringing back retirees and starting seasonal workers early.

SUMMITNET AND DNRC

Summitnet is a statewide communications network designed primarily for state government and university system use. Summitnet is a multi-protocol network allowing mainframe (SNA), Internet (TCP/IP), and Novell (IPX/SPX) traffic. The Information Technology Bureau has received several inquiries recently concerning Summitnet and how it applies to DNRC.

Communications and data transfer are the primary benefits of Summitnet.

- Users attached to Summitnet have the capability to log in to the state mainframe or any network file server attached to the system. DNRC users at remote locations could log in to the Kalispell, Missoula, or Helena networks and access all data stored there.

- Internet access is provided through Summitnet. Instead of using a private Internet service provider, users could access the Internet through the state system.

- For most DNRC offices, the major benefit of Summitnet lies in electronic mail. Most of the DNRC field offices currently send and receive e-mail through a state mainframe modem or through a PC modem. Using these methods, only a few users in each office have access to state e-mail at their work stations. If a field office installs a local area network and has Summitnet connectivity, every user connected to the network would have e-mail to his or her desktop computer.

In order to achieve the above system, a field office would first need to install the local area network. The costs involve a file server, a network adapter for each

Summitnet. . . *continued on page 8*

DEPARTMENT NEWS

Summitnet. . . *continued from page 7*

PC, and the monthly Information Services Division (ISD) subscription fee. Start-up costs for a five-user office would be around $4,000 for the file server and the network cards. The ISD subscription fee for the FY98/99 biennium is $55 per PC per month. A Summitnet connection can be obtained through a request to ISD.

The combination of a local network and Summitnet places some very powerful tools in the hands of DNRC computer users. These are the tools we will use to conduct our business in the future.

PLAINS UNIT TO MOVE

As soon as the contractor fixes the leaks in the roof and some interior water damage, the Plains Unit will move into a brand new 2,900-square-foot building. Unit personnel include Unit Manager Marvin Miller, Office Manager/Dispatcher Teresa Garrison, Service Forester Everett Young, Unit Fire Supervisor Jeff Reistroffer, Fire Team Leader Calvin Minemeyer, Unit Forest Management Supervisor Jon Hayes, and Management Foresters Jack Isaacs and Larry Ballantyne.

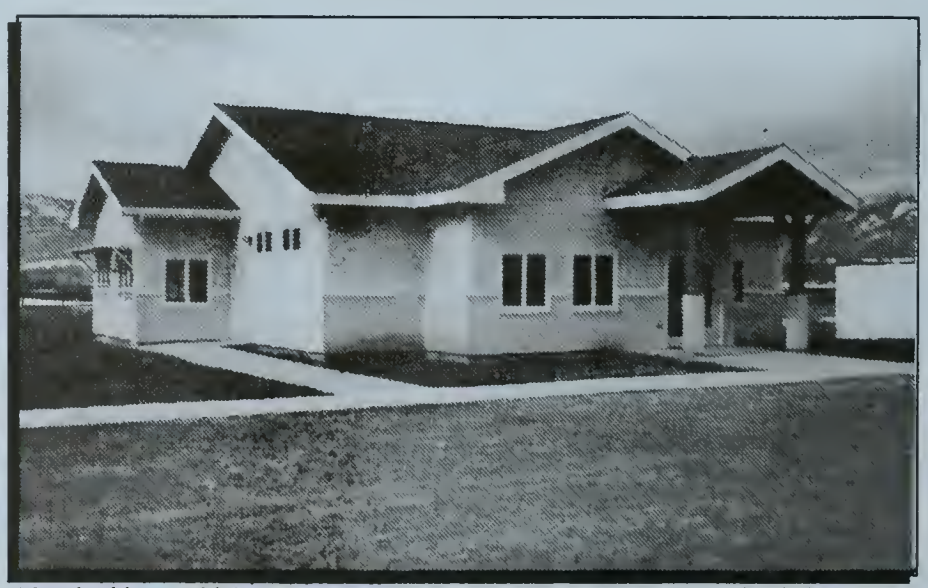
Miller said that, in addition to housing unit personnel, the new quarters will also house an interagency fire dispatch center. The agencies involved will be the Plains Unit of DNRC, the Plains/Thompson Falls and Superior Districts of the Lolo National Forest, and Sanders County. "The building is also designed to house the Sanders County Disaster and Emergency Services Center if an emergency results in closure of the 911/DES center in Thompson Falls," he said.

The Plains office had been a one-man operation since the early 1960s. When Miller came in 1971, he was stationed in the unheated basement of the ASCS/SCS office building. "That was nice in the summer time, but we sure spent some cold winters there," Miller said. The office became a full unit with all programs in 1975.

In 1977 Miller and his crew moved to the present 3-1/2-acre site, on Sanders County property next to the Plains airport. The first office on this site was a 10' x 50' military excess trailer house that had been built in the 1940s. "This old trailer was used as the office until 1983. It is presently used as our meeting, training, and fire crew lunch/lounge area," he said. Also in 1977, an identical trailer was moved onto the site to become the fire cache building.

"In 1983, we got a 20' x 50' double-wide trailer house (1960s vintage) on excess from the Anaconda Job Corps," Miller said. "This became our office, and serves as such to this day."

Miller said that long-range building funding has been requested to construct a new fire cache/shop/garage building. This request is presently being reviewed by the legislature. "As soon as we have new permanent buildings in place," he said, "we plan to remove the trailers from the site. They are looking for a new home. Anybody want 'em?"



New building at Plains

Photo by Everett Young

DEPARTMENT STAFF

NEW FACES, NEW JOBS

These persons either started employment with DNRC or changed positions within the agency in January or February 1997. We wish you success in your new job!

Dave Amman transferred from his position as hydrologist in the Reserved Water Rights Compact Commission to water resource specialist in the Water Resources Division effective January 6. Dave has a B.S. degree in watershed hydrology from Utah State University and has worked in other hydrology positions.

Steve Dobson was hired on January 21 as the land use specialist for the Central Land Office, Conrad Unit. Steve joins DNRC with a B.S. in range science from Montana State University.

Susan Kirley has diversified from her position in the Oil and Gas Conservation Division and is also working part-time in the Personnel Bureau on a temporary assignment. Susan graduated from Carroll College with a B.A. degree in Communications and Public Relations.

Paula Rosenthal transferred from her position as community forestry coordinator in the Southwestern Land Office to community forestry specialist in the Forestry Division's Service Forestry Bureau effective January 6. Paula received her B.S. in forestry from the University of Montana. Prior to coming to DNRC, Paula was a field biologist at the USDA Ranger District in Superior, Montana.

Janice Yearry was promoted from accounting technician to grant/contract accounting technician in the Centralized Services Division on February 1. Janice has completed courses in accounting, SBAS, Lotus, and Windows at the Helena College of Technology. She has also worked as a travel agent for AAA Travel and as a bookkeeper for Southern Union Gas Co. in Prescott, Arizona.

IT'S YOUR TURN . . .

We'd like to have a regular column in *DNRConversation* that features employee letters, questions, and comments. Several employees made this suggestion during last summer's readership survey, and we think it's a good idea.

It will work, however, only if you contribute. Please send your letters, questions, and editorials to Carole Massman at 1625 Eleventh Avenue, Helena, MT 59620-1601, or use ZIP!Office. Then we can include them in an "It's Your Turn" column.

Remember, too, that you're always invited to submit news articles and photographs.

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Please send news articles or ideas for articles to Carole Massman, 1625 Eleventh Avenue, Helena, MT 59620-1601; call her at 406-444-6737; or use Zip!Mail.

DEPARTMENT STAFF

JANET CAWLFIELD RETIRES

Janet Cawlfield was hired in the "old" Department of Natural Resources and Conservation on September 21, 1971. She first worked for Conservation Districts Division (which is now the Conservation and Resource Development Division) and later for Water Resources Division.

On December 10, 1979, Janet was hired in the former Department of State Lands as secretary to the commissioner. Since that date she has also acted as executive secretary to the State Land Board, a five-member group of Montana's top elected officials who oversee the administration of state trust land.

With the reorganization of state government in 1995, and without changing jobs, Janet found herself back in the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. She was still working for the commissioner—but now he was called the "director."

Through all the changes, Janet remained an exemplary employee. She has been the recipient of the Governor's Employee Recognition Award and the Centralized Services Division Employee Award, among other outstanding achievements.

Since her retirement on March 31, 1997, Janet has been working with her husband, George, on the family ranch in the Helena valley. George retired from DNRC last summer. The department won't be the same without Janet. We wish her and George well in their retirement.

Janet Cawlfield shows the cake she received from State Land Board members (from left): Attorney General Joe Mazurek, DNRC Director Bud Clinch, Secretary of State Mike Cooney, and Governor Marc Racicot. (Because of a broken leg, the remaining board member, State Auditor Mark O'Keefe, attended via speaker phone.)

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